

Please replace all prior versions of the claims with the following listing of claims:

CLAIMS (as amended per response mailed on May 6, 2003)

1 (currently amended). A handle section (1) of an electric dental cleaning or brushing device (1, 2), with a coupling section for coupling a brushing or cleaning tool (2) thereto, [particularly a brush attachment,] with a drive mechanism (23) for driving the coupled brushing or cleaning tool, and with a control device (27) for controlling the drive mechanism, wherein **[characterized in that]** the control device (27) possesses an interlock device (100), for preventing operation of the drive mechanism, which is deactivatable by an interlock canceling element (7) provided [in particular and preferably] on the brushing or cleaning tool, such that when the brushing or cleaning tool is coupled to the coupling section of the handle, the drive mechanism can be operated whether or not the brushing or cleaning tool is in a user's mouth.

2 (currently amended). The handle section as claimed in claim 1, wherein **[characterized in that]** the interlock device (100) is deactivatable or deactivated by the interlock canceling element (7) when the brushing or cleaning tool is coupled to the handle section.

3 (currently amended). The handle section as claimed in claim 1, wherein **[characterized in that]** the control device (27) includes an encoding detection device (5) for detecting an encoding of the interlock canceling element (7) of the coupled [attached] brushing or cleaning tool (2), and that the interlock

device (100) is deactivatable in response to a signal from the encoding detection device (5).

4(currently amended). The handle section as claimed in claim 3 [1], wherein [provision is made for] a switch is provided on the handle section (1), [preferably] said switch being an on-off switch of the drive mechanism (23), for activation of the encoding detection device (5), said drive mechanism (23) being adapted to be turned on upon a signal from [positive response of] the encoding detection device (5) or upon deactivation of the interlock device (100).

5(currently amended). The handle section as claimed in claim 1, wherein [**characterized in that**] the interlock device (100) operates electronically.

6(currently amended). The handle section as claimed in claim 3, wherein [**characterized in that**] the encoding detection device (5) is of the noncontacting type.

7(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 3, **characterized in that** the encoding detection device (5) is actuatable mechanically.

8(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 7, **characterized in that** the encoding detection device (5) includes at least one movable and/or elastically deformable sensing element (17) adapted to be moved and/or deformed by an encoding of the cleaning tool (2), and produces a signal characteristic of in particular the movement and/or deformation.

9(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 8, **characterized in that** the sensing element (17) is constructed as an electrical contact member.

10(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** a probe element of the encoding detection device (5) is movably, preferably displaceably, mounted and has an engagement surface (56) for engagement with a corresponding actuating surface (55) of a cleaning tool (2).

11(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 10, **characterized in that** the engagement surface mates with the actuating surface of the cleaning tool (2) such that on coupling engagement of the cleaning tool (2) with the handle section the probe element is moved by an amount predetermined by the actuating surface (55), and that the encoding detection device (5) includes a motion sensor (17; 57), for example, a switch, for detecting the movement of the probe element.

12(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 10, **characterized in that** the probe element is formed by a drive shaft (28) mounted preferably in longitudinally displaceable fashion.

13(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 11, **characterized in that** the motion sensor is a probe element (57), for example, a switch, according to claim 8 or 9.

14(currently amended). The handle section as claimed in claim 3 [1], wherein [**characterized in that**] the encoding detection device (5) includes a signal receiver (20) for receiving an encoded signal from the brushing or cleaning tool (2), more specifically [particularly] from the interlock canceling element (7), and/or a signal transmitter (20) for transmitting a signal, particularly an interrogation or activation signal, to the coupled brushing or cleaning tool (2),

more specifically [in particular] the interlock canceling element (7).

15(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the encoding detection device (5) includes an optical sensor (12; 13; 15) for detecting an optical encoding of the respective cleaning tool (2) attached, particularly the interlock canceling element (7).

16(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the encoding detection device (5) includes a magnetic sensor (6; 9; 10) for detecting a magnetic encoding of the respective cleaning tool (2) attached, particularly the interlock canceling element (7).

17(currently amended). The handle section as claimed in claim 3 [1], wherein [**characterized in that**] the encoding detection device (5) includes a sensor (9), more specifically [in particular] a circuit [or the like], for detecting a metallic and/or electromagnetic encoding of the brushing or [respective] cleaning tool (2) coupled [attached], more specifically [particularly] the interlock canceling element (7).

18(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the encoding detection device (5) includes a capacitive sensor (21) for detecting a capacitive encoding of the respective cleaning tool (2) attached, particularly the interlock canceling element (7).

19(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the encoding detection device (5) includes an electrical sensor for detecting an electrical encoding of the respective cleaning tool (2) attached, particularly the interlock canceling element (7).

20(currently amended). The handle section as claimed in claim 3 [1], wherein [**characterized in that**] the encoding detection device (5) is arranged in a closed, [in particular] fluid-tight handle housing (26).

21(currently amended). The handle section according to [the prior art portion of]claim 1, wherein [**characterized in that**] the interlock canceling element (7) for deactivation of [an] the interlock device (100) of the handle section (1) is [associated with the handle section itself, being in particular] fastened to or in a [the] handle housing (26).

22(withdrawn). The handle section as claimed in claim 21, **characterized in that** a drive shaft (28) of the handle section (1) is provided as interlock canceling element (7) as by magnetization.

23(currently amended). A brushing or cleaning tool[, in particular a brush attachment,] with a housing, a coupling section extending from the housing to effect coupling to a handle section (1) of an electric dental cleaning device, and [**characterized by**] an interlock canceling element (7) secured directly or indirectly to the housing for deactivation of an interlock device (100) of the handle section (1), the interlock device, when activated, disabling the electric dental cleaning device from operating in a normal manner, such that when the brushing or cleaning tool is coupled to the handle section, the drive mechanism can be operated whether or not the brushing or cleaning tool is in a user's mouth.

24(currently amended). The brushing or cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, wherein [**characterized in that**] the interlock canceling element (7) includes an encoding device or

[acting] member [or is configured as an acting member] having [in particular] a magnetic, electrical, capacitive, electromagnetic, optical and/or mechanical encoding function or property [acting function].

25(currently amended). The brush or cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, wherein [**characterized in that**] the interlock canceling element includes a signal receiver for receiving a signal from the handle section (1) and/or a signal transmitter for transmitting an interlock deactivating signal to the handle section (1)[, in particular a smart transponder chip (19)].

26(currently amended). The brush or cleaning tool as claimed in claim 25, wherein [**characterized in that**] the signal receiver and/or the signal transmitter, in the form of one or more metal [particular] coils (44, 45), have [are assigned] encoding elements for encoding a [the] received signal.

27(currently amended). The cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, wherein [**characterized in that**] the interlock canceling element possesses an encoding body[, particularly a shaped body,] which is fixedly connected to a [the] body of the cleaning tool and arranged and configured so as to be positioned in the range of detection of an encoding detection device (5) of the handle section (1) when the cleaning tool (2) and the handle section (1) are in a coupled condition.

28(withdrawn). The cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, **characterized in that** provision is made for at least one actuating section as interlock canceling element, which on coupling of the cleaning tool (2) to the handle section (1) actuates a probe element (28) or a sensing element (17; 57) on

the handle section (1), particularly by moving and/or deforming it by a predetermined degree and/or in a predetermined direction and/or exerting a predetermined force thereon.

29(withdrawn). The cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, **characterized in that** as actuating section an actuating surface (55) is provided, in particular a pressure application surface, an abutment or the like, which registers with a corresponding engagement surface (56) or mating abutment associated with the probe element (28) or sensing element of the handle section (1) in such manner that on coupling of the cleaning tool (2) to the handle section the engagement surface (56) on the handle section is moved by a predetermined amount and/or in a predetermined direction and/or is acted upon by a predetermined force.

30(withdrawn). The cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, **characterized in that** the interlock canceling element (7) is configured in such manner that preferably a section of a drive shaft (49) in the cleaning tool cooperates with a drive shaft (28) of the handle section (1).

31(withdrawn). The cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, **characterized in that** the interlock canceling element (7) includes at least one magnetic field effecting member or encoding body (8) which is arranged preferably in the area of a coupling end of the cleaning tool (2).

32(withdrawn). The cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, wherein the interlock canceling element (7) includes at least one dielectrically acting member or encoding body (8) which is arranged preferably in the area of a coupling end of the cleaning tool (2), being constructed to protrude beyond the end in particular in the direction of the coupling motion.

33(withdrawn). The cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, wherein the interlock canceling element (7) includes an optical waveguide (37) communicating with a light entrance opening (38) and a light exit opening (39) provided preferably in the coupling end of the body of the cleaning tool.

34(currently amended). The cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, wherein [**characterized in that**] the interlock canceling element (7) is an integral part of a [the] body of the cleaning tool.

35(currently amended). The cleaning tool as claimed in claim 23, wherein the interlock canceling element (7) is releasably connected to a [the] body of the cleaning tool [preferably releasably].

36(withdrawn). The cleaning tool as claimed in claims 33, wherein the interlock canceling element (7) is integrated in a ring (8) arranged at a coupling end of the cleaning tool, being in particular snap-fittable to the body of the cleaning tool by positive engagement therewith.

37(withdrawn). An electric dental cleaning device, in particular toothbrush, with a handle section (1) in combination with a cleaning tool (2) adapted to be coupled thereto, each according to claim 1.

38(withdrawn). An electric dental cleaning device, in particular toothbrush, with a handle section (1) according to claim 1 in combination with a cleaning tool (2) adapted to be coupled thereto, said tool being compatible with the handle section (1) but having no interlock canceling element (7).